OS Wars: The Penguin Strikes Back

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This article actually continues my investigation of PDF readers from our two previous issues, this time looking at programs running under Linux (whose mascot is Tux the penguin). However, *because* we're talking Linux, we've got a lot of explanation and a fair amount of whimsy to get through first.

Just slightly less than four years ago, I wrote my first article for this newsletter. Published in the May 2005 issue, it described more than a dozen experiments that I performed, trying to get Windows XP SP2 to dual boot with various flavors of Linux. (Some succeeded, but many failed). Now, I'd been aware of Linux for many years before; but it was while doing the research for said article that I truly realized that Linux had a realistic shot at bringing down the Empire of Microsoft: Great God Gates, Darth Balmer, and all.

Solitaire-y Man

So, why didn't I switch to Linux right then? Two things: One, "time bugs". Linux had them, just like Windows. (Those are phenomena that drive me crazy, but which nobody else seems to even notice, much less care about. I've ranted on and on about them in several previous articles. Don't worry, I won't go into any more details now). Two, Solitaire. Linux has several different versions of Solitaire, but in *all* of them, when you move one of the exposed cards on the playing field, the face-down card underneath it automatically turns face-up immediately. I really, really, really, really, really *hate* this. My joy of the game is just about entirely ruined by that one little instance of unnecessary and overly-helpful intrusion. Once upon a time, in a conversation with another member, I tried to

explain why this upsets me so much. I didn't get my point across then, but maybe I can do so now.

Over the years, I've developed a set of rules that I play by. I'm sure that just about everybody else has done the same; and I'm sure that their rules are different; from mine and from each other's. I'm not saying that mine are better. I *am* saying that they're *mine*. I'll give you one example. Let's say that I have a black four and two red threes exposed on the playing field. Which three should I move over to the four? Here are my rules for such a situation: If there are more face-down cards underneath one of the threes, I pick that one. If not, I pick the three that's closer to the four. If both threes are the same distance from the four, I pick the one on the right. You get the idea.

When multiple moves are available (usually on game opening), my rule is this: *Don't* turn over any of the face-down cards on the playing field until *all* existing moves have been completed. I don't remember ever having six exposed but still face-down cards, but I've occasionally had five, and I often have four. The point is, I don't want to turn up any more possible new moves until after I've *finished* processing all of the old ones. A Linux game's automatic card-turning "feature" completely wipes out my ability to do that; thus absolutely, positively and totally destroying my enjoyment of the game. You don't have to agree with me. Just accept that, for me, that's the way it is.

Now, I've also ranted on and on in the past about the evil underpinnings of Vista. How it has multiple instances of built-in spyware. How it has at least three built-in Trojan Horse viruses (WGA, tilt bits, and driver revocation). How it's more of a Digital Rights Management System than an Operating System. Here, however, is the ultimate betrayal: *Vista Solitaire automatically overturns cards!* Some offenses just *can't* be forgiven. I'll *never* move to Vista.

Instead, I've begun planning my ultimate move to Linux by making everyday use of as many cross-platform programs as possible under XP (OpenOffice.org, Firefox, Scribus, etc). When moving day comes, I'll find a bunch of familiar friends

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waiting for me on the other side. As for Solitaire, I'll just have to pick a Linux version, download its source code, and viciously hack that utterly vile function out of it. (Cue the eerie violin music from *Psycho*). Then I can compile my own version of the game, and play it ***my way***. (Imagine that Frank Sinatra sang those last two words.)

Speaking of Solitaire: I ran across this cartoon a while ago, when I was doing an Internet search for computer clip-art. I remembered the punch line, so I ran a Google search to find a link for use in this article; and I got 31 hits. Unfortunately, none of them seem to be an "official" website. The link below, from New Zealand, was the first result that came up in my search. The cartoon itself is Copyright 2007 by King Features Syndicate and Rina Piccolo. The comic strip is called Six Chix, and features the work of six female cartoonists in more-or-less sequential rotation. I won't say anything more, or I might ruin this profound study of the most frequent program run on many a PC.

http://carcino.gen.nz/images/index.php/4745ed0f/5fd54add

And now for something completely different: Serious technical content.

Linux PDF Readers

The FSFE (Free Software Foundation Europe) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization active in many European countries and involved in many global activities. On the Internet, they published the following list of "Free Software" PDF readers:

> Evince (Linux)
> KPDF (Linux)
> MuPDF (Windows)
> Okular (Linux, Mac, Windows)
> Skim (Mac)
> Sumatra PDF (Windows)
> Xpdf (Linux)
> Yap (Linux, Windows)

For the purpose of copyright acknowledgment, here's a link to their complete web page: *http://pdfreaders.org*.

For this article, MuPDF, Skim and Sumatra PDF don't qualify because they don't run under Linux. Xpdf and Yap seem more like developer tools than end-user programs, so I've dropped them too. (I only had time for a quick look at their respective web sites, and both of them turned me off. Thus, I could be mistaken. If so, I apologize). That leaves us with three experimental subjects: Evince, KPDF and Okular. Temporarily, I'm adding a fourth: GPDF. You'll see why in a minute. Also, please note that most of the details given in the three paragraphs below were confirmed by (if not copied outright from) Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (*www.wikipedia.org*).

KPDF and Okular were developed for KDE. Evince and GPDF were developed for GNOME. KDE and GNOME are two desktop environments for Linux. (Both can be used by

other operating systems too; but we won't go into that right now). KDE (started in 1996) was named as a take-off on CDE (Common Desktop Environment), an already existing but proprietary desktop environment for UNIX and VMS. It has been erroneously suggested that the K was meant to stand for "Kool", or that it was symbolically selected because in the Latin alphabet it's the letter right before L (for Linux); but neither of those after-the-fact rationalizations is true. It was just a play on words. (Letters?) It never meant anything.

On the other hand, GNOME (started in 1997) originally stood for "GNU Network Object Model Environment". (In this case, the G sounds like the only "natural" letter. For the rest, it seems as if they picked the acronym first, then searched for words to fit it). Currently, that full expansion of the name is considered to be obsolete. So some developers have suggested eliminating the acronym completely, and just calling it "Gnome".

In the past, programs developed for GNOME usually started with a G, and programs developed for KDE usually started with a K. Hence, GPDF and KPDF. Nowadays, they don't do that as much. Hence, Evince and Okular. Evince has already superseded GPDF in GNOME. That's why GPDF wasn't on the list, and why we won't be checking it out here. Okular is poised to wipe out KPDF any day now, but it hasn't quite done so yet. Therefore, we'll still be checking both out below.

To get KDE, I booted from my current favorite Linux live-CD, Slax 6.0.7 (released in May 2008). It's a little bit out of date, but I still like it. (The latest version, 6.0.9, was released in December 2008). Slax is based on Slackware, the oldest surviving Linux distribution. To get GNOME, I booted Ubuntu. That's a good choice, since Ubuntu is the most popular Linux distribution of all, but that wasn't why I picked it. Ubuntu just happened to be the ***only*** Linux live-CD that I knew for certain ran GNOME. Having used a somewhat older version of Slax, I wanted to get an up-to-the-minute version of Ubuntu. Unfortunately, my timing for this article couldn't be much further off. I'm writing it in February, and Ubuntu's next release is due in April. So the best I could do was to download the ***Alpha 4*** ISO CD image of Ubuntu 9.04 (released 02/05/2009, it's not even a Beta yet), burn it to a CD, and then boot my computer from it.. Fittingly, Ubuntu is based on Debian, the ***second*** oldest surviving Linux distribution. At this point, I should emphasize that this is ***not*** an article comparing the relative merits of Slax and Ubuntu, or even of KDE and GNOME. It's only concerned with PDF readers. Therefore, I'm leaving out a lot of steps that don't have much to do with viewing PDF files.

We'll take Slax first. After it booted, I looked at all the selections on the K Menu. I found KPDF as one of the five selections listed under "Office". I couldn't find Okular anywhere. Since I would have looked at KPDF first anyway, I started it up. Right away, from the menu bar, I selected Help > About KPDF and got a pop-up window identifying it as KPDF 0.5.9, and also saying "kpdf, a kde pdf viewer based on xpdf". So, in a way, Xpdf (initially rejected above) "made the cut" as well. Then, I used the standard File > Open menu selection to

open 2008-01.pdf. (I picked that file because it has a picture on page one, and I'm in it).

I immediately noticed a new feature. (New to me, anyway). On the left side of the screen was a column containing thumbnail views of each of the document's pages. (Though they were at least four times bigger than either of *my* thumbnails). On the Tools menu, I found a Browse Tool, a Select Tool and a Zoom Tool (which we won't be looking at this time). The Browse Tool is the default, and corresponds to the Hand Tool in the Adobe and Foxit Readers (except that it keeps the standard "arrow" mouse pointer instead of displaying a little hand on the screen). I switched to the Select Tool, and swiped a few rectangles to select some text. I found that I could select a complete block of text, or just a partial column from anywhere inside that block. The Column Select function lives! (I don't think that I'll be using it very often, but it's nice to know it's there). Each time, when I'd finished swiping, a little menu popped up. Here's the one I got when I selected the first five sentences of Mike Redlich's *President's Note*:

> Text (357 characters)
>
> Copy to Clipboard
>
> Image (271 by 65 pixels)
>
> Copy to Clipboard
>
> Save to file

The first and third lines are just labels. The rest are commands. The second line is the standard text-into-clipboard function. The fourth line copies the selected area on the page into the clipboard as an image. The fifth line saves the selected area of the page as either a PNG or a JPEG image file. At first, I wondered why anyone would ever need those last two selections. Then, a possible scenario occurred to me. Let's say that a rival computer club published an article in their newsletter, in which they referred to me as incompetent. Now, that's slander. After all, even at my worst, I'm at least semi-competent. As I was preparing to crush them with a multi-million dollar lawsuit, I might want to include an exact image of the offending passage in my complaint, rather than just transcribing the words. (Realistically, I don't think that I'll be using those particular functions very often either, but who knows?) Switching to already existing images, I found that I could swipe a rectangle to select all or just part of the picture with me in it. Here's the little menu that popped up when I selected the whole thing:

> Image (542 by 220 pixels)
>
> Copy to Clipboard
>
> Save to file

Look familiar? Anyway, this shows that as far as "cutting it out" is concerned, KPDF can do everything that the Adobe or Foxit Readers can do; and more besides. What about its soon-to-be-replacement, Okular? Here I hit a snag. Slax is a small distribution. (It fits on one of those 211 MB mini-CDs with room to spare). It has a "Module Manager", but it doesn't include an obvious way to download just one application. With time and effort, I could probably have figured out how to do it; but here I had an advantage. I'd previously done some experiments with an older Ubuntu live-CD, including successfully downloading several programs. So: On to Ubuntu.

After Ubuntu 9.04 Alpha 4 booted, I checked out all the entries under the Applications, Places, and System menus; but I didn't find any trace of Evince (or GPDF either). So I went to Places > Removable Media, and found all four of my hard disk partitions listed as Media. (Removable?) Anyway, I clicked once on the partition containing the ACGNJ files, and a window came up labeled "disk - File Browser". From its menu bar, I selected Help > About and got a pop-up window identifying that "File Browser" program as Nautilus 2.25.4. I scrolled down and double clicked on 2008-01.pdf. A window displaying the contents of that file came up, just labeled "2008-01.pdf". That program included the thumbnails, but it couldn't select images, and it could only select full blocks of text, not partial columns. Help > About identified the program as Document Viewer 2.25.5. It also credited "The Evince authors", so I presumed some kind of a connection existed. (I thought that it might share code with or be a stripped down version of Evince. In the Open Source world, good code often gets re-examined and re-used in other projects. That's one of the processes by which it's turned into *great* code). So I went to Ubuntu's Add/Remove Applications section, where I got a big surprise when I attempted to download the "full" version of Evince. Apparently, I already had it.

It looks like the Evince authors are going for simplicity, and don't consider the "cut it out" functions to be important. Furthermore, it looks as if a lot of other people agree with them. Under "Popularity", Evince was given five stars, while Okular got only four. Still, all my hopes were now pinned on Okular. (I don't know whether to give the credit to Okular or to Ubuntu; but Okular, though it was developed for KDE, can run on GNOME under Ubuntu). So I downloaded and installed it, and my faith was rewarded. Okular 0.7.2 did

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Back Issues Needed

The editor is attempting to build a CD containing all issues of ACGNJ News in pdf format, but our collection is incomplete. We're hoping some faithful reader has been hoarding them and will be willing to lend them to us just long enough to scan them. We promise to return them quickly. Thanks Joseph Gaffney, who loaned his collection for scanning. Below is a list of what we still need.

1985: June, July, August, September

1984: August

1976: January, February, March, April (pamphlet-size booklets)

1975: All issues except #1 (June). These are also pamphlet-size booklets.

If you can supply any of these missing issues (or scanned images or good clear copies), please contact the Editor by email (*bdegroot@ptd.net*). Those who supply missing issues will receive a free copy of the resulting CD as our thanks for your help. 🖳

Circuit Writer Version 6.6

Jim Scheef (jscheef (at) dacs.org), Director, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT (www.dacs.org)

Is the cloud really DRM in disguise?

You remember Richard Stallman, right? He's the founder of the Free Software Foundation (*fsf.org*), creator of the GNU operating system (*gnu.org*), and has been called "the last true hacker" for at least 20 years(see separate sidebar in this issue).

His take on cloud computing could not differ more from John Patrick. Stallman would tell you that you give up your freedom when you give your data to a remote site rather than keeping it on your machine with free software. There are many, many blogs discussing the comments Stallman made in an interview and I referenced one of them last month – InformationWeek, November 19, 2008 (*tinyurl.com/6zztcc*) to save you from digging).

Here is a quote from the interview: "One reason you should not use Web applications to do your computing is that you lose control," he said. "It's just as bad as using a proprietary program. Do your own computing on your own computer with your copy of a freedom-respecting program? If you use a proprietary program or somebody else's Web server, you're defenseless (sic). You're putty in the hands of whoever developed that software."

Another name for cloud computing is "software as a service". SaaS has been a hot ticket for the last few years for all sorts of enterprise level applications. Some say that cloud computing is just a new name for buying your software and having it hosted remotely. One of my sons just completed a successful SAP implementation for his company. With people using the system at distribution depots all over the country, it made more sense to have the system hosted than to invest in all the data center infrastructure needed to provide enough bandwidth for adequate response times – not to mention the people needed to manage that equipment. In this case, cloud computing is just business reality. By the way, their hosting service is in New Jersey.

When we look at the cloud services that we mere mortals might want to use like Zoho Applications (*zoho.com*) or Google Apps, some are free as in free beer but none are free as in free speech. When you sign up for such a service, no matter what the service agreement might say about your privacy, your data is at the mercy of that site and its security. And, unlike open source software, you cannot modify the software used by the service to make it suit your needs. The service agreement may even prohibit you from reverse engineering the software and the DMCA could make doing so a crime. Do you begin to see his point? On one hand we have John Patrick telling us to embrace the cloud to free ourselves from worries about backup and data loss with easy access from wherever we might be; and on the other hand we have Richard Stallman. As always, the truth is likely to be found somewhere in the middle. We will explore this more next time.

In the meantime, where did cloud computing begin? How is cloud computing different from timesharing on a minicomputer or mainframe? Was CompuServe and similar services the original consumer cloud? You can comment on my blog at (*circuitwriter.spaces.live.com*).

Continued

The Penguin Strikes Back, *continued*

everything that KPDF could do, which (as you saw above) was actually *more* than I'd asked for.

Parenthetically: As I was downloading Okular, the following thought occurred to me; "It's amazing. Here I am, downloading more than *forty* interdependent component files from the Internet, and installing them into an operating system that *doesn't really exist*. At least not physically, because *nothing* can be written to the closed-session live-CD that I booted from. Virtualization technology has sure come a long way."

I'd already compromised my principles once for this article (by using Alpha software), so it wasn't as hard for me to do it a second time. For the sake of fairness, I decided that I had to take a look at Adobe Reader 9; but I wasn't *so* unprincipled as to install it on one of my regular systems. I downloaded and installed it on a temporary XP setup that I created by restoring the Ghost image of an old XP drive to an empty spare hard disk.

When I opened 2008-01.pdf in Adobe Reader 9, it was displayed full width on the screen (no thumbnails to the left). However, I quickly found an option identified as "Pages: Go to specific pages using thumbnail images." When I selected it, I got the by now familiar column of thumbnails on the left. So they *are* there, but not enabled by default. I think that's actually the better choice, since it starts you out with a bigger view of the document. The single Select Tool still handles both text and images. You can select complete images, or just parts; but you can only select full blocks of text. (No partial column selections allowed). Whatever selections you make, the only thing you can do with them is copy them to the clipboard. As far as "cutting it out" goes, that's all unchanged from Adobe Reader 7. If only I could trust it not to "phone home".

Finally, you might have noticed that, on the FSFE list above, Okular was identified as being available for Linux, Mac, *and* Windows. I can't comment about the Mac part (since I've looked at Macs, but I don't think I've ever actually touched one); but I *can* say that the Windows part is more theoretical than practical. Unlike Firefox, OpenOffice.org and Scribus, Okular doesn't have a single downloadable and executable installation file. Instead, you first have to download and install the complete KDE environment on top of your Windows installation. Then, through KDE, you can download and install Okular. As far as I'm concerned, that's much too much trouble to go through to get what is, after all, only just a slightly nicer PDF Reader. So Foxit Reader can breathe easier. It's still my recommended Windows PDF Reader. (At least for now). Okular, however, is the new heavyweight champ; and the new standard for all future comparisons.

See you next month. 💻

How Can I Keep My PC Clean and Tidy?

Gabe Goldberg (tiplet (at) gabegold.com), Computers and Publishing, Inc.

Like changing your car's oil or replacing your home's air conditioner filter, a little PC cleaning pays off with a faster, more reliable, and longer-lasting computer.

Although nothing suggested here is either rocket science or inherently dangerous, always follow the medical adage, "First, do no harm". So don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable (perhaps have a more experienced person clean up while you watch and learn), and back up your system and data. Then reboot, to get a clean start, and don't open any programs,

Before starting, to measure what your cleanup deletes, determine how full your hard drive is. Open My Computer, Right Click your hard drive (usually labeled "Local Disk (C:)"), and click Properties. Note how much space is used and free, then close the dialogue box.

Next, use Windows' built-in disk cleaning tool. Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup, and the drive to clean, likely C. Choose what to clean; default selections are usually what you need. To be extra thorough, if your system has been running problem free, click the More Options tab and then Clean Up System Restore. Confirm your choice and click OK.

Delete Web browser temporary files. Using Internet Explorer, click Tools on the Menu Bar, Internet Options, and Delete Files under the General tab. Other browsers provide similar functions, sometimes using "cache" to refer to the collection of temporary files.

Delete unneeded personal files, items outdated and no longer used. While most Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, etc.) store their files in the My Documents folder, you may have changed this default location. And other apps likely have their own favorite places to stash files. Look around, since cluttered files make Windows work harder to get things done and waste time and resources when they're backed up. If you collect photos, music and such, delete those you no longer want or need, perhaps saving them on CD/DVD or ISB drive. Sorting files by size or date helps find deletion candidates.

If you run PC-based email software, it's worth periodically purging Sent and Trash folders, perhaps pitching material older than a certain date. Then look for a Compact Folders option, sometimes on the File pulldown menu, which squeezes out unused space from email folders.

Weed out software no longer used or useful by uninstalling applications with Window's Control Panel Add/Remove Software tool.

The Recycle Bin, which preserves erased files for recovery until it's emptied, has likely grown during this cleanup process. To empty it, Right Click its Windows desktop icon and click Empty Recycle Bin. Note that programs such as Norton

Continued

Circuit Writer Version 6.6, *continued*

The CAN-SPAM Act as a warning

One of my favorite columnists is Scott Bradner who writes in Network World. His column in the January 12 issue (*tinyurl.com/aytbvu*) is especially noteworthy. As news coverage of the inauguration reached a crescendo, all the business press could talk about is all the new regulation expected from the new Congress. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that regulation is needed in several areas. However, as Scott points out, the legislation intended to regulate spam isn't. He points out that the act was written by the spam industry and thus legitimized spam as a business model. Lesson number one, regulatory legislation must be written by and enforced by someone who wants it to be effective. In the case of the Internet, no regulation is often the better policy as the various attempts at suppressing porn have shown. However our recent experience with the financial industry as proven that no regulation is just not a viable option.

Is your DSL router vulnerable?

Read this article (*http://tinyurl.com/8faqxt*) on Dark Reading to see if your DSL router might be vulnerable to attack. The affected routers are commonly used on AT&T DSL service. A quick web search shows a simple DSL gateway device, not the common "2-Wire" device. Apparently the Motorola/Netopia 2210 device does not require authentication to change configuration. Imagine that.

The Julie Amero ordeal is finally over.

Back in November, in a nearly total absence of press coverage, Julie Amero pled guilty to a misdemeanor, paid a $100 fine and lost her teaching credentials. In my opinion, she should have been totally exonerated and reimbursed by the state. You can read a good synopsis of the case at reasononline (*tinyurl.com/6gq3yr*) and (*julieamer.blogspot.com*).

Events to remember?

An upcoming "I remember" moment may be the transition to digital television broadcasting. Any bets?

There is no doubt that the current financial crisis and the ensuing recession will be remembered for some time to come. So what are people doing about it? eWeek reports (*tinyurl.com/7g8b6w*) that IBM CEO Sam Palmisano told the Obama transition team that government investment could lead to the creation of more than 900,000 jobs in areas such as broadband access, health care IT and upgrading the electrical grid. Wouldn't that be rewarding? In addition, Palmisano suggested that the government convert existing data centers to green ones. Gosh, I wonder where he got that idea.

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How To Switch Internet Browsers

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Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, **have** to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. Fox example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to

Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time.

How Can I Keep My PC Clean and Tidy?, *continued*

Utilities may offer other cleanup options for the Recycle Bin and other Windows components.

Finally, remember that when writing to your hard drive, Windows places bits of each file in the next available open space on the hard drive.

While Windows can reassemble them, having many files fragmented slows access to them. So, to store all files as single entities, periodically defragment the hard drive. To do this, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter, select a drive, and click Defragment.

When finished, compare the amount of hard drive space used and free to what you saw initially. If this is the first cleanup you've done in a while, the amount of space recovered may surprise you.

Many books give much more detailed instructions for PC cleanups. Search Amazon.com for "degunking windows" and

"cleaning windows" to see choices (but don't be distracted by instructions for cleaning house, office, and car windows!).

Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux

Kerry Miller (n0wiq (at) comcast.net), Front Range PCUG, Colorado (http://www.frpcug.org)

I used to use Microsoft Windows up to Windows 98. I then switched to Windows NT in a dual boot system with Linux. However, when I went to boot NT one more time and NT gave me a message to the effect "I'm sick, fix me," I said goodbye to Windows and Linux has been my main operating system since. I found Linux applications to match all my user data. I was able to move all that data from the NT file system (NTFS) to the earlier Windows file system (FAT). From there I copied all the data into the ext2 file system, which was used by Linux at the time.

Now let me count the ways I like Linux:

1. Linux resembled the HP-UX operating system () I was using at work. This made going between work and home easier.

2. The roots of the Linux operating system go back to the late 1980's. By the time I decided to switch to Linux, it was a viable (if little known) multi-user, multi-tasking operating system for Personal Computers. That meant I could establish more than one user for my PC and run multiple programs simultaneously—I was not restricted to either the Windows or MAC operating systems for those PC capabilities. And, of course, Linux was (and still is) free.

3. Linux comes with a distribution of the X windows protocol produced by an international consortium. To understand this capability, think of it as "...providing the basic framework for building Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and moving windows on the screen and interacting with a mouse and/or keyboard." (extracted from). Because this capability was (and is) not built into the operating system, it provides greatly enhanced flexibility for anyone creating Linux applications.

4. For those familiar with the Windows and MAC operating systems, it is surprising to realize that the software that creates what you see as the "desktop" can actually be a separate application program. I use the GNOME desktop together with X windows. This desktop (one of several that can be used with Linux) allows me to use a number of different screens and switch between them as I wish. This allows me to open an application on one screen and switch to a different screen to open another application. From : "The GNOME project puts heavy emphasis on simplicity, usability, and making things 'just work....'"

5. There are a wide range of user applications available, as well as tools to write your own applications.

6. Linux has (and has had for some time) a reputation for stability. The operating system doesn't crash unless the user does something to make it crash. Around 1997 (about the time I decided to change to the Linux operating system) I read an article (in a Linux magazine) professing to use two computers as near identical as production processes allow. They loaded one computer with Microsoft Windows and the loaded the second computer with Linux. They ran similar bench mark programs on both computers. The machine loaded with Microsoft operating system crashed in a short time. The machine loaded with Linux continued to run for as long as the comparison experiment was set to run.

7. Many distributions of Linux are as easy, or easier to install than Microsoft Windows.

8. A person can customize and/or build a Linux operating system to meet individual needs.

9. Many distributions of Linux include such primary applications such as the Firefox web browser, OpenOffice, an office suite similar to Microsoft Office (word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, etc.), and a number of other "name brand" applications.

10. Linux can be cost free. There are hundreds (or more) of applications written for Linux and there is a growing library of applications.

Microsoft Windows was the new kid on the block at the time I switched to Linux from my point of view and it did NOT do many ordinary things well.

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How To Switch Internet Browsers, *continued from page 1*

Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into to the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

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Review – Roxio Creator 2009

John Roy (johnroy1 at comcast.net), The PC Users Group of CT (www.tpcug-ct.org)

Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, continues as the premiere must have CD/DVD burning suite. This product is a collection of key applications bundled into an attractive launching interface. Key applications provided are CD/DVD burning tools, Audio, Photo, and Video tools, and more. The Roxio suite provides support applications necessary to effectively use your computer just like Microsoft Office suite provides key office software.

When I reviewed Easy Media Creator Version 10 earlier this year I was impressed with how clean the interface was for the multitude of applications within the suite. The latest version further simplifies the application selection process with the use of pleasing colors and descriptive icons. It also provides a direct link to online tutorials and other information. The only distraction from the clean interface is the "Learn More" window that connects to the Roxio website to promote the sale of additional products.

The application interface Home Page presents the core tasks for most users. The tasks include burning and labeling discs, ripping audio, copy and converting DVD video and backing up files. Selecting one of the primary applications will quickly open the application and you are ready to start. There was some initial confusion of how to return to the previous page because the new page did not have a cancel button. If you closed the page with the standard "x" selection it would close the whole product. After a short examination I realized that the left set of icons were still available to select and return to home or another application. Although further review disclosed inconsistencies in returning to the home page depending upon which application you opened. So some applications you must close using the "x" and others if you use the "x" you will close everything down and have to reopen the whole product. This area needs better consistency.

When you select an application group using the left icons (Data-copy, Video- Movies, Music-Audio, Photo, and Online) a clean screen opens up with sub grouping to further home in on your desired application. The Data-Copy screen provides three groupings of Create, Copy, and Backup. Each grouping contains subtasks to further refine your application selection. There are nine defined tasks associated with Data-Copy. The long time favorite Roxio Creator Classic is now disguised as "Burn Data Disc – Advanced" but it still opens the original application and still reflects the original name. It appears that this popular tool is still the same with a different entry skin. The application was always sound so the fact that it is still there in its original attire is not a problem other than the interface name.

The Video-Movies group, Music-Audio group, and Photo group all contain four subgroups (Import, Edit, Create, Enjoy) with eleven to sixteen subtasks each. The names are very generic which in my opinion keeps concepts familiar. Executing a generic name launches a familiar Roxio application.

In addition to the icon selections there are three pull down windows, File, Tools, and Help. The file and help selections are pretty standard. The Tools pull down provides a couple of ease of access clicks like ejecting and closing the drive tray, getting disc information and some alternate ways to jump to a few selected applications. There is an extensive Options choice to configure user defaults.

The latest Roxio Creator 2009 version does provide some new tools like the ability to capture High Definition (HD) video and burn it onto standard DVDs. There is now an Audiobook Creator that makes it easy to convert and enjoy books on iTunes, iPod, iPhone or other portable players. There is an audio beatmatching tool to produce studio like fades and mixes. I found the new SyncIt desktop gadget tool cool but short on instructions. It converts and sends digital media directly to your portable device. Since I don't own a portable device I couldn't appreciate its value. You can now share photos and slideshows on line including uploading directly to YouTube.

I tested this version of Roxio on my new Vista 64bit system with an AMD Quad-Core processor and 5 GB of memory. I didn't experience any installation problems but it was disconcerting that some applications did not load crisp and fast as expected even though my system is clean and devoid of startup programs.

Okay, what is the bottom line on this latest version? If you don't already own a Roxio suite then I highly recommend you give serious consideration to purchasing this since it will serve as a primary computer application suite. If you presently own Easy Media Creator version 9 or 10 and it meets your immediate requirements then you can afford to wait if the new features and enhancements are not important to you.

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Why Security Precautions are Necessary

Bob de Violini (rjddev (at) gmail.com), Channel Islands PCUG (www.cipcug.org)

First off , there's a story that illustrates just why you should always enable encryption on your wireless router (for those who use one) AND why you should be leery of any public computer for Web sites you need a password to access. A college student in Kentucky has been charged with identity theft, among other crimes, for planting malware on computers in his school's library. The malware was a keystroke logger that captured usernames and passwords for any pages fellow students logged into. He then used this information to access their e-mail accounts and send out e-mails attempting to extort these same fellow students. He also used an unsecured wireless router to access these accounts, making it look as if someone else were actually sending the e-mails. The attempted extortion took the form of a threat to divulge personal information the thief had stolen from the compromised e-mail accounts. That leads me to our next item, WPA encryption.

As of the beginning of November, a pair of computer security researchers in Europe disclosed a technique they'd developed to partially hack WPA encryption used by a great number of wireless routers today. Before anyone thinks the sky is falling, rest assured it isn't. Their hack involves only the traffic being sent from the router to a computer and only a small number of data packets can be cracked before the router resets its encryption. However, it is enough to be able to send just enough rogue data to a computer to compromise it with any number of known vulnerabilities. Specifically, it involves the TKIP protocol that WPA and WPA2 are allowed to use. The specifics of just how this trick is accomplished have been made available to hackers in many areas of the Internet, so it's just a matter of time before it begins spreading. TKIP and AES encryption are selectable by the user in many wireless router configurations, and some have WPA with TKIP selected by default. I strongly recommend you check your wireless router's encryption configuration, and if it's set to use WPA with TKIP, you switch to WPA2 with AES if at all possible. This is especially important if you use a wireless router to run a network for a business. I have my Linksys wireless router set to use WPA2 with AES encryption. AES is significantly harder to crack than the older TKIP protocol. One final note on this, however. For AES encryption to work, both the router and the network adapter in the computer must be able to use it. Some older hardware may not support AES encryption, so an upgrade may be needed. If you'd like some more information, please drop me a line at the email address at the top of this article, and I'll gladly send you a link or two.

Scare of the Month Department

It isn't Halloween, but we have the Scare of the Month Department chiming in with some news. There is a new phishing e-mail making the rounds disguised as a warning from the U.S. Federal Reserve. The message bears the usual dire warning of a scam and contains links for readers to follow to get more information. However, there are a few clues that give the message away as a hoax, the biggest one being poor grammar. The links in the e-mail lead unsuspecting readers to a fake site that will redirect them to a search page for porn, which will download a PDF file with malware to their computer. The malware comes in various forms, including one that attempts to make your computer a member of a botnet. A brief notice can be had here, courtesy of USCERT: *http://tinyurl.com/66lzv9*. The link does go to the US-CERT site; I just used TinyURL to shorten the URL's length.

Patches Galore Department

As I mentioned above, there have been some exploits on the loose for a bit for Adobe Acrobat, and the full program and the reader have been updated as a result. The latest versions are 8.1.3 and 9.0. Adobe has also updated its Flash player, standard fare in most browser installations, to version 10.0.12.36 to patch publicly reported vulnerabilities last month as well. Not to be outdone, Mozilla has also issued a patch for its Firefox browser and Thunderbird e-mail client. These patches address several bugs that have been brought to light in the past month to month and a half. The latest iterations of Firefox are 2.0.0.18 and 3.0.0.4. The latest version of Thunderbird is 2.0.0.18. I have read reports of some problems with version 3.0.0.4 and 2.0.0.18 of Firefox, with most of the reports being about version 3.0.0.4. The solution for those having problems after upgrading to 3.0.0.4 has been to go back to 3.0.0.3. I have updated my version to 2.0.0.18 and have had no problems. Some patches take longer than others to develop and test, however. One of the patches issued by Microsoft on November's Patch Tuesday took them seven years to develop and test. The bug it patched was first reported by a security researcher in March 2001. Microsoft claims that it tried patching it when it was first reported but wound up killing off most networking applications with the patches when they underwent testing. However, they didn't give up and finally found a way to patch the vulnerability earlier this year.

While we're speaking of Microsoft, it has announced plans to abandon its One Care concept of computer protection service and develop free anti malware applications for release in 2009. The new concept is code named "Morro." As usual, folks are coming down on both sides of pro and con when it comes to this development. Microsoft hasn't given a firm release date for the new software, but has said that One Care will come to an end on June 30.

Well, that's all for now. Always practice safe computing by keeping your applications and your anti-malware applications fully up to date. Make sure to run your anti-malware scanner(s) once a week, even if they don't flag anything in between Scans.

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"AccuKidz" Website – Educational and Safe for Children

Ira Wilsker (iwilsker (at) apcug.net), APCUG Director

I have written many columns about the threats on the internet, and many of those online threats have been directed at children. The popular social networking sites used by millions of children and adults have been abused by some, and become a source of online threats and other undesirable actions directed against our children. Now there is a free, kid-safe website that is educational and fun for children, which can be used to safely communicate with other children worldwide, and as a display page for student activities and projects.

This new page, a service of the renowned weather service AccuWeather is "AccuKidz", *(AccuWeather for Kids) and online at *www.accuweather.com/kidz*. AccuKidz is a special interest site for kids which specializes in weather news, but offers other beneficial services such as social networking, and a place to display student projects. This website offers the child fun educational topics including weather, photography, video production, science, art, and other subjects. AccuKidz offers free web pages to schools and class teams, including home schooled children, where kids can post their work, photos, weather videos, science projects, and items of community interest for the world to see.

Once a school team creates its own free AccuKidz website, that page is explicitly dedicated to that group or class, and displays photos uploaded by team or class members, shows the local weather in real time, and showcases any projects being done by the group or individuals. Each team or class chooses its own team name, and can use the dedicated website to coordinate special projects, collect and share data, present reports, post news items, or any other material desired by the team.

Among the many features of AccuKidz are forums where children can ask questions of other children (and teachers), compare ideas, discuss weather and other scientific topics, and talk about community events. Other AccuKidz teams and participants from all over the world will see the forum postings, and many will respond, creating an excellent and educational social network for our children. Teachers and classmates may use the dedicated team website as the designated location to distribute class project information and data, collect results from participants, participate in weather related projects, and provide a source of bilateral communication among the team members and other participants.

There are many resources available to the students and teams, all free. Children and teachers can access and utilize countless weather maps, radar images, satellite images, historical information, and maps and other information of noteworthy events around the world. The students and teachers can access information on trends, historical averages, facts, figures, graphs, charts, and other resources on temperatures, precipitation, and other data that can be used for student research projects. Other resources that can be freely accessed by the students include numerous articles, forums, and other special features presented by some of the world's leading weather experts. These resources explain in understandable terms topics including climatology and weather forecasting. In order to make the topic more interesting for the students, and encourage active participation, AccuKidz offers child safe contests, games, and other activities that can enhance the student learning experience. Rather than treating science topics as theoretical, AccuKidz shows the practical relationships of how weather affects our daily lives, ranging from sports to transportation, and from gardening to safety issues. There are ample opportunities for teams and students who desire to focus on areas of special interest to pursue those interests.

The web pages are provided for free by AccuWeather to any school or classroom team, and offer expert site monitoring by an AccuWeather squad, who will remove any inappropriate content, and edit the site for content. The teacher or team needs no technical skills to create or administer the website, and since content monitoring is provided by AccuWeather, the site should comply with most school webpage policies. While anyone can post photos, videos, and presentations, all uploads are monitored for inappropriate content and edited as appropriate. There are very few rules on the use of AccuKidz; it is a place for students, teachers, and parents to present and exchange community information, weather information, and science topics. Unlike the more traditional social networking websites and services, AccuKidz is not for purely personal messaging and gossip, but instead for the exchange of ideas and relevant information. AccuWeather will monitor AccuKidz for accuracy, appropriateness, and compliance with the rules, and edit content as necessary to maintain a high standard of service and content.

Creating an AccuKidz team is fairly simple and free. From the website at *www.accuweather.com/kidz* click on "Create Yours". It is necessary to create a team name that contains the word "team", and then register on both the photo gallery and the forums. A quick review of the teams displayed (click on "Weather Teams") shows that there is more than just school and class teams, but teams consisting of brownie troops, cub scouts packs, church teams, home schooled kids, teams from museums, and other non-academic teams as well as from more traditional academic locations. Teams can also be created from after-school groups of all kinds, college teams, chambers of commerce, non-profit groups, churches and other religious groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, resorts, tourist attractions, historical sites, photo clubs, video organizations, nature areas, and zoos. This is an excellent educational opportunity for virtually any type of organization.

The heart of AccuKidz consists of forums where participants can exchange information and ideas, a photo gallery with tens of thousands of weather photos uploaded by participants, "Learn about weather" where easy to understand weather information and facts are presented, "Your weather" which displays a localized weather page, an art contest, a listing of "free stuff and games" with online educational games and giveaways, and resources for teachers.

AccuWeather is to be commended for creating such an excellent educational and free resource available to all. I would like to see our local schools, scouting organizations, home schoolers, Sunday schools, and others take advantage of it. 🖳

SIG News

C/C++ Programming
Bruce Arnold (barnold@ieee.org)

http://acgnj.barnold.us/index.html

This group is devoted to programming languages in general and C, C++, and C++ for Windows programming in particular. Each month a small but hopefully useful program (complete with source code) is presented for discussion.

January: *The editor apologizes for last month's report on a year-old meeting. Following is the correct report.* I continued discussion on the batch or bulk emailer program called "Bmailer". Additional features have been added that affect the "Look and Feel" of the application. Remember that the program uses text files for input. The first is the recipients email addresses that could contain hundreds of addresses. The second is a template text file that will be sent out to each recipient. Two new buttons have been added that allow the two files to be edited when you catch a spelling error or wrong address. Logic has now been added to allow for HTML statements and formating. A checkbox now optionally adds a greeting like "Hi Frank," at the beginning of each email. These and other code changes fall under the "General Visual Studio .NET programming" category. When the "Send Mail" button is clicked, the application starts sending out the emails to the given SMTP provider. Since some providers don't allow high speed batch processing, an optional 30 second delay is provided between outputs.

February: This month I discussed several concepts that can be added to your programs. The first is a program that handles the screen in a manner similar to the popular sound program WinAmp. The similarity is the user interface that allows it to snap into position at the corners of the screen when the user moves the window. It's called SNAP DEMO and the code can be used in any program.

The second snippit is called REGISTRY DEMO. It works like this. A simple window opens with 3 buttons, a listbox, and a textbox. When a folder location is typed into the textbox, and the GET FILES button is clicked, the file listing of that folder is displayed in the listbox. The folder location may then be saved permanently in the REGISTRY by clicking on the PUT REG button. This code was inspired by a user of last months program, Bmailer. The user said that he was tired of entering the smtp server address everytime he used the program.

Our *download site* has code and programs from most meetings.

Our next meeting March 17. 💻

LUNICS (Linux/Unix)
Andreas Meyer (lunics@acgnj.org)

http//www.acgnj.org/groups/lunics.html

LUNICS is a group for those who share an interest in Unix and similar operating systems. While we do quite a bit with Linux, we've also been known to discuss Solaris and BSD too. We generally meet on the first Monday of the month at 8 PM at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. See the web page for directions and more information. *Our next meeting Apr 6.* 💻

Web Dev
Evan Willliams (tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com)

This SIG is an open forum for all Website Development techniques and technologies, to encourage study and development of web sites of all kinds. All languages will be considered and examined. Anyone interested please contact the Chairperson. The current project is a CMS for the club. Anyone interested in starting a new project, come to the meeting and announce / explain. Provide as much detail as possible. WebDev should be an all-encompassing development and examination forum for all issues, applications, OS, languages and systems one can use to build Websites. We currently have two Web dev languages .NET and Java as SIGs but the other langages and OS need to be investigated, examined and tested; Windows, Linux, UNIX, DEC, Vax, HP etc. Intel-PC, Motorola-MAC etc.

Our next meeting March 11. 💻

Java
Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

http://www.javasig.org

The Java Group covers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level Java programming. Primary focus is on developing useful/practical applets and applications, but can include topics such as Java I/O, JavaBeans, Reflection, object-oriented programming and software design issues.

February: This month's meeting featured Barry Burd demonstrating the functional programming languages, Haskell and Jaskell. Haskell is a very pure, very elegant programming language, and Jaskell is a port of Haskell to the Java JVM. The talk explored the important features of Haskell, emphasizing the differences between functional and non-functional programming. Near the end of the talk, we throw a bone to the Java contingent by exploring Haskell on the JVM.

March 10: Getting Started with the Stripes Framework

Main Meeting
http://www.acgnj.org/groups/mainmeet.html

Mike Redlich (mike@redlich.net)

Next meeting: March 6 💻

Investment Software
Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/sig_investment.html

The Investment SIG continues with presentations on how to use analysis programs TC2000 and TCNet. Large charts are presented on our pull down screen and illustrate the application of computer scans and formulas to find stocks for profitable investments. Technical analysis determines buy points, sell points and projected moves. Technical analysis can also be used on fundamentals such as earnings, sales growth, etc. We're no longer focusing on just Telechart -- if you are using (or interested in) Tradestation, eSignal, VectorVest -- or just in learning how to select and use charting and technical analysis, come join us !!

Our next meeting: March 12. 💻

Windows 7 is Coming Soon

Sandy Berger (sandy (at) compukiss.com), CompuKISS (www.compukiss.com)

If you ask 100 people their impressions of the Microsoft Vista operating system, 95 of them will tell you that Vista is no good, even if they have never seen or used it.

It is obvious that public opinion of Vista is in the mud. Microsoft made some major blunders when they introduced Vista. There were not enough drivers ready, so many printers, scanners, and other peripherals were incompatible. There was no noticeable speed increase over Windows XP. Vista requires much additional memory and more hardware, so it was often impossible to upgrade current Windows XP computers. Also, Microsoft did not woo the press as they did when they introduced Windows XP, so Vista got a lot of awful publicity. Vista is not a bad operating system, but Vista has gotten a bad name. Microsoft has lost the battle and they know it. So they are working on a new Windows operating system.

Microsoft hopes to make a clean break with previous Windows operating systems with this new version of Windows. They are especially distancing the new operating system from the "wicked" Vista operating system. This is obvious in the name they have chosen for the new OS. They are not using year names like Windows 2000. They are not using what they refer to as inspirational names, like XP or Vista. Instead, they will go back to their original numerical naming convention. There was a Windows 1, Windows 2, and Windows 3. Now there is to be a new operating system called "Windows 7". It you have been following the versions of Windows as they have been introduced, you will find it difficult to comprehend that this next version is actually the seventh version of Windows, but Microsoft says that it is, so that is that. It's Windows 7.

More important than the name, however, is the fact that Microsoft cannot afford another misstep. They must make this operating system faster and better than Vista. Microsoft has already showed off Windows 7 at some developer's conferences and has made some announcements and promises.

Windows 7 will be built on the Vista base, so peripherals that work with Vista, which now includes most printers, scanners, and other devices, will also work with Windows 7.

Windows 7 will have a smaller storage footprint and will use less memory. This will allow it to run on the new small Netbooks that are now running Windows XP or Unix because Windows Vista cannot run on their small solid state drives.

Windows 7 will boot up and shut down faster. It will have improved battery life on laptops. It is also promised to have an easier-to-use interface and to be easier to network in a home environment.

Although Microsoft is officially targeting January 2010 for the launch of Windows 7, logic indicates that they will have Windows 7 ready for next year's holiday selling season.

This holiday season may have found some great prices on computers running Microsoft Vista. If all goes well, when the holiday season rolls around in 2009, the stores will be filled with computers running the next version of Windows, Windows 7. Microsoft has made mistakes before, but I think they will do everything they possibly can to make Windows 7 a winner. So If you are looking to buy a new PC, this year may be a good time to buy, but, if you can wait, next year may be even better.⌨

SIG News, *continued*

Layman's Forum

Matt Skoda (som359@aol.com)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/laymans.html

We meet on the second Monday of the month (no meetings in July and August) to discuss issues of interest to novice users or those who are planning to get started in computing. Watch our Web page for updates and announcements.⌨

Window Pains

John Raff (jraff@comcast.net)

http://www.acgnj.org/groups/winpains.html

Our intent is to provide members with Windows oriented application discussions, Microsoft and Linux style. Presentation to be directed to more heavy technological level of attendee, although newbies are welcomed.

Our next meeting March 16:⌨

FireFox Activity

Firefox@acgnj.org

This SIG is intended to be an open forum for **all** FireFox and Mozilla techniques and technologies, to encourage the study and development of web sites of all kinds. All the browsers will be considered and examined. All are encouraged to "think out of the box" about new web site design. All members and guests are invited to check out the design concepts and voice their opinion.

Our next meeting March 16.⌨

NJ Gamers

Gregg McCarthy (greggmc@optonline.net)

http://www.NJGamers.com

www.lanparty.com

The next Friday Night Frag will be March 13, 6 p.m. to Saturday 12 noon — 18 hours for 5 bucks!

BYOC - Bring your own computer

BYOF - Bring your own food.

and if you don't like sitting on metal chairs... BYO chair!⌨

Guru Corner

If you need help with any of the technologies listed below, you can call on the person listed. Please be considerate and call before 10 PM.

Software

HTML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
ColdFusion	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
CSS	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
	Jo-Anne Head	908-769-7385
Java	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
C++	Bruce Arnold	908-735-7898
	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
ASP	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Perl	John Raff	973-560-9070
	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
XML	Mike Redlich	908-246-0410
Genealogy	Frank Warren	908-756-1681
Home Automation	Frank Warren	908-756-1681

Operating Systems

Windows 3.1	Ted Martin	732-636-1942

Discount Computer Magazine Price List

As described by the DealsGuy

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr
Computer Games	$10.95	20.95	29.95
Computer Gaming World	14.95	28.95	41.95
Computer Shopper1	16.97	32.95	47.95
Dr. Dobbs Journal	15.95	30.95	
Mac Addict	10.97		
Mac Home Journal	15.97	29.97	
Mac World	12.95		
Maximum PC	9.95	18.95	27.95
Microsoft System Journal	21.95	39.95	
PC Gamer	12.95		
PC Magazine (22/44/66 Issues)	25.97	48.95	68.95
PC World	16.95		
Wired	6.00	12.00	17.00

These prices are for new subscriptions and renewals. All orders must be accompanied by a check, cash or Money Order. Make payable to Herb Goodman, and mail to:

Herb Goodman, 8295 Sunlake Drive, Boca Raton, FL 33496

Telephone: 561-488-4465, e-mail: *hgoodman@prodigy.net*

Please allow 10 to 12 weeks for your magazines to start. For renewals you must supply an address label from your present subscription to insure the correct start of your renewal. As an extra service I will mail a renewal notice about 4 months prior to their expiration date. I carry more than 300 titles at excellent prices — email for prices. 💻

ACGNJ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Sign up online at http://www.acgnj.org/membershipApplication.html and pay dues with PayPal.

Dues

	US/CANADA	FAMILY OF MEMBER (No Newsletter)	FOREIGN	STUDENT	SENIOR CITIZEN (Over 65)
1 Year	$25	$10	$55	$20	$20
2 Years	$40				
3 Years	$55				$45

Mail this application and your check to:

AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY, INC., P.O. BOX 135, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal　　☐ Address Change

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ URL _____

What topics would you like to see covered at club meetings? _____

Other Local Computer Groups

Princeton Macintosh User Group: 7:15 pm 2nd Tuesday, Jadwin Hall, A-10, Washington Rd, Princeton, (609) 252-1163, *www.pmug-nj.org*	**Linux Users Group in Princeton:** 7 pm, 2nd Wednesday, Lawrence Branch Mercer Library, Rt#1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrence NJ *http://www.lugip.org*	**New York PC:** 3rd Thurs, 7 pm, PS 41, 116 W 11th St. For info call hotline, (212) 533-NYPC, *http://www.nypc.org*
Computer Education Society of Philadelphia: Meetings & Workshops at Jem Electronics, 6622 Castor Ave, Philadelphia PA. *www.cesop.org/*	**Brookdale Computer Users Group**: 7 pm,3rd Friday, Brookdale Community College, Bldg MAN Rm 103, Lincroft NJ. (732)-739-9633. *www.bcug.com*	**NJ Macintosh User Group**: 8 pm, 3rd Tuesday, Allwood Branch Library, Lyall Rd, Clifton NJ. (201) 893-5274 *http://www.njmug.org*.
PC User Group of So. Jersey: 2nd Mon., 7 pm, Trinity Presb. Church, 499 Rt 70 E, Cherry Hill, NJ. L. Horn, (856) 983-5360 *http://www.pcugsj.org*	**Hunterdon Computer Club:** 8:30 am, 3rd Sat, Hunterdon Medical Center, Rt 31, Flemington NJ. *www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org*, (908) 995-4042.	**NY Amateur Computer Group:** 2nd Thurs, 7 pm, Rm 806 Silver Bldg, NYU, 32 Waverly Pl, NYC. *http://www.nyacc.org*
Morris Micro Computer Club: 7 pm 2nd Thurs., Morris County Library, Hanover Ave, Morristown NJ, (973) 267-0871. *http://www.morrismicro.com*	**Central Jersey Computer Club**: 8 pm, 4th Friday, Rm 74, Armstrong Hall, College of NJ. Rich Williams, (609) 466-0909.	**NJ PC User Group:** 2nd Thurs, Monroe Rm at Wyckoff Public Library, 7 pm. Maureen Shannon, (201) 853-7432, *www.njpcug.org*
Philadelphia Area Computer Society: 3rd Sat, 12 noon Main Meeting, groups 8 am-3 pm. Upper Moreland Middle School, Hatboro PA. (215) 764-6338. *www.pacsnet.org*	**NJ Computer Club:** 6:15 pm, 2nd Wednesday except Jul & Aug, North Branch Reformed Church, 203 Rt 28, Bridgewater NJ. *http://www.njcc.org*	**Princeton PC Users Group**: 2nd Monday, Lawrenceville Library, Alt Rt 1 & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, Paul Kurivchack (908) 218-0778, *http://www.ppcug-nj.org*

Classified

FREE TO MEMBERS. Use our classified ads to sell off your surplus computer stuff. Send copy to Classified, ACGNJ NEWS, P.O. Box 135, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 or e-mail to the editor, *bdegroot@ptd.net*. Classified ads are free to members, one per issue. Non-members pay $10. Send check payable to ACGNJ Inc. with copy. Reasonable length, please.

apcug   Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

http://www.apcug.net

Radio and TV Programs

Computer Radio Show, WBAI 99.5 FM, NY, Wed. 8-9 p.m.

Software Review, The Learning Channel, Saturday 10-10:30 p.m.

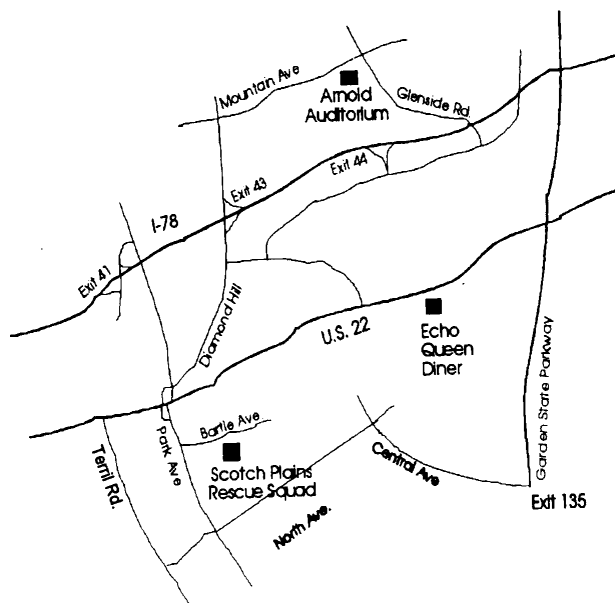**On Computers**, WCTC 1450 AM, New Brunswick, Sunday 1-4 p.m. To ask questions call (800) 677-0874.

PC Talk, Sunday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., 1210 AM Philadelphia. 1800-876-WPEN, Webcast at *http://www.pctalkweb.net*.

MarketPro Shows

http://www.marketpro.com/

March 14-15:Crowne Plaza Meadowlands,Secaucus

March 28-29: NJ Convention Center (Raritan Center), Edison

Directions to Meetings at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains NJ

From New York City or Northern New Jersey

Take Route 1&9 or the Garden State Parkway to US 22 Westbound.

From Southern New Jersey

Take Parkway north to Exit 135 (Clark). Stay on left of ramp, follow circle under Parkway. Bear right to Central Avenue; follow to Westfield and under RR overpass. Left at light to North Avenue; follow to light in Fanwood. Right on Martine (which becomes Park Ave). Right on Bartle Ave in middle of shopping district.Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is located on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed.

From I-78 (either direction)

Take exit 41 (Scotch Plains); follow signs to US 22. Turn right at light at bottom of hill and use overpass to cross Rt. 22. Follow US 22 Westbound directions.

From US 22 Westbound

Exit at Park Avenue, Scotch Plains after McDonalds on the right, diagonally opposite Scotchwood Diner on the left, immediately before the overpass. After exiting, turn left at the light and use overpass to cross US 22. Bear right at bottom of ramp to continue south on Park Avenue. Turn left at the second light (a staggered intersection). Scotch Plains Rescue Squad (2-story brick) is on the right. Do not park in the row next to the building — you'll be towed. We meet on the second floor, entering by the door at the right front of the building.

From Western New Jersey

Take US 22 Eastbound to the Park Avenue exit. The exit is about a mile past Terrill Road and immediately past the overpass. Exit onto Park Avenue South and follow the directions above to the Rescue Squad building.

How To Send An Email Message To Any Cell Phone

Ken Peters (product.review (at) hhicc.org), Hilton Head Island Computer Club, SC (www.hhicc.org)

Impress your kids, grandkids and friends with your ability to text. Send a text message to their cell phone by email from your computer.

Most cell phones have the ability to send and receive short text messages. This is called short message service (SMS) or text paging. This service can take email sent over the internet and deliver them to a cell phone as a text message. Each carrier has its own email address extension i.e. *@tmomail.net* for T Mobile carrier.

The two things you need to know to send a message are the person's cell phone number and their carrier's email extension. So to send to a T Mobile phone, enter the phone number and add the extension (*8433216549@tmomail.net*).

Some of the common cell phone emails are:

Alltel AT&T (formerly Cingular)

10-digit phone number@message.alltel.com

10-digit phone number@txt.att.net

Example: 2125551212@message.alltel.com

Example: 2125551212@txt.att.net

T-Mobile Verizon

10-digit phone number@tmomail.net

10-digit phone number@vtext.com

Example: 4251234567@tmomail.net

Example: 5552223333@vtext.com

Virgin Mobile USA US Cellular

10-digit phone number@vmobl.com

10digitphonenumber@email.uscc.net

Example: 2622341256r@vmobl.com

Example: 2125551212@ email.uscc.net

Sprint PCS (now Sprint Nextel)

10-digit phone number@messaging.sprintpcs.com

Example: 2125551234@messaging.sprintpcs.com

If you can't find the email address for the carrier, check the carrier's website or call their customer service.

The one receiving the message may be charged 10 to 15 cents per message unless they have a plan that includes text messaging. Your kids and grandkids most probably do have a text plan. There is a 160 character limit per message including the email address and the subject line. Some carriers will split the message into two messages if it is longer.

The person receiving the email text message can reply to you from their phone and sometime later you'll receive their reply in your email inbox. If you don't like texting from a cell phone or hate trying to type a message with those small phone keys, give this a try. It's fun.

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ACGNJ MEETINGS

For the very latest news on ACGNJ meetings visit the ACGNJ Web Page (*http://www.acgnj.org*)

Monday, March 2, 2009

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, March 3

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Friday, March 6

8 P.M. - Main Meeting, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*). CANCELLED

Monday, March 9

8 P.M. - Layman's Forum, Matt Skoda (*som359@aol.com*), 908-359-8842. No meetings in July or August.

Tuesday, March 10

7:30 P.M. - Java, Mike Redlich (*mike@redlich.net*) 908-246-0410.

Wednesday, March 11

7 P.M. - WebDev SIG, Evan Williams (*tech@evanwilliamsconsulting.com*)

Thursday, March 12

8 P.M. - Investing, Jim Cooper (jim@thecoopers.org).

Friday, March 13

6 P.M. to 5 A.M.- NJ Gamers. Gregg McCarthy (*greggmc@optonline.net*), 732-721-6507. Break 8 to 10 P.M.

Monday, March 16

7 P.M. - Firefox Activity, David McRitchie (*firefox@acgnj.org*)

Tuesday, March 17

7:30 P.M. - C/C++ Users, Bruce Arnold (*barnold@ieee.org*), 908-735-7898

Friday, March 20

8 P.M. - Window Pains, John Raff (*john@jraff.com*).

Tuesday, March 31

7 P.M. - Board of Directors meeting.

Monday, April 6

8 P.M. - Lunics, Andreas Meyer (*lunics@acgnj.org*) 💻

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, 1916 Bartle Ave., Scotch Plains, N.J. Directions and map inside back cover.